

T H E
C R E E D

O F T H E

Eternal Generationists.

[Price Six-pence.]

PLATE

C. R. E. D.

OF THE

Internal Generation

[Reference]

T H E
C R E E D
O F T H E
E T E R N A L G E N E R A T I O N I S T S.

Compiled from the WRITINGS of some of those
sensible, consistent, and orthodox Gentlemen.

Dr. Free
B Y I S A A C H A R M A N.

To open the blind Eyes.

Isa. xlii. 7.

*We believe that JESUS CHRIST is the SON
of GOD by Eternal Generation of the Substance
of the FATHER — Yet we believe that the
FATHER's Effence or Substance is not the
Matter out of which he is Begotten.*

Creed, Article I.

L O N D O N,

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MDCCLXVIII.

C R A E D

OF THE

INTERNAL OF THE

RECORDS

L O N D O N

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T H E
P R E F A C E.

THAT CREEDS or CONFESSIONS of FAITH have a claim to *Antiquity*, very few, I believe, if any will take upon them to deny.

The *Jew* we are told * had his CREED, which contained the six Principles, the Beginning of the Doctrine of Christ, the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of. There is also a well-known CREED which some have had the Assurance to father upon the *Apostles*, who probably were as little concerned in the Composure of it, as Timothy's Grandmother *Lois*, or his Mother *Eunice*. It is thought, however, to have been framed very early, as a Summary of the Christians Faith, to distinguish them from the Jewish and Heathen World.

Besides these, "There are several other CREEDS recorded by the Antients. We have a CREED in *Irenæus*, the CREED of *Origen*, the CREED of *Tertullian*, the CREED of *Gregory Thaumaturgus*, the CREED of *Lucian* the Martyr, the CREED

* Gill's Sermon, Form of Sound Words, &c. p. 9.

of the *Apostolic Constitutions*, the CREED of *Jerusalem*, the CREED of *Cæsarea in Palestine*, the CREED of *Alexandria*, the CREED of *Antioch*, the *Nicene* CREED as first published by the Council of Nice, and the *Nicene* CREED as enlarged by the Council of Constantinople :” to all which may be added the CREED of St. *Athanasius* * of blessed Memory, and the CREED which is the Standard of the *Popish* Religion, established by *Pope Pius* the Fourth in the Council of Trent.

• Of this CREED the Rev. Mr. William Robertson, (to whom I acknowledge myself indebted for the Account of the several CREEDS above-mentioned) gives the following remarkable Account.

After taking Notice of a Variety of CREED-Makers, who appeared at different Periods of Time, and who always took great Care in their several Compositions to anathematize and condemn one another, &c. he says, “ Thus Things went on in the Christian World for several Ages, when there appeared a CREED, no-body knew by whom it was composed, or from whence it came, that vastly exceeded any Thing which had ever appeared before under that Title : and to this the Author, whoever he was, very cunningly prefixed the Name of St. Athanasius. This Man was in high Estimation in the ROMISH Church—They extolled him as one of the greatest of *SAINTS*, and greedily swallowed down any Thing which bore his Name. St. Athanasius’s CREED soon became the Standard of the true Faith, and every Body was taught to say, whosoever will be saved must above all Things believe it thoroughly ; and he who did not, without doubt should perish everlastingly. All the Learned agree that St. Athanasius, with all his Assurance never went so great lengths in any damnatory Clauses : and whether *Vigilius*, Bishop of *Tapsa* ; or *Hilary*, Bishop of *Arles* ; or *Vincentius*, a Monk, of *Lerins* in *Provence*, for all these are named, or any other was the Author of this famous Composition, it is the most wonderful, mystical and unintelligible, that ever was obtruded upon the human Understanding.”

Attempt to explain the Words REASON,
SUBSTANCE, &c. p. 96.

As

As *CREEDS* therefore were in repute so *early*, and have been of *so long standing* in the *holy Catholic Church*, I presume it will be altogether needless for me to make any Apology for my Conduct in compiling and publishing the following, under the novel Title of *THE CREED OF THE ETERNAL GENERATIONISTS*.

I cannot say that I much expect the *Thanks* of any of those Gentlemen in *Black*, for whose Benefit it is *principally* intended: on the contrary, I am rather inclined to believe that some of them will think the Discipline of the *Horse-Whip* * a more suitable Reward for the Labour of such an *impertinent Scribler*: or, perhaps I may be *put to*, and have a little gentle Correction given me at the *Cart's-Tail* † by some one or other of our Reverend Doctors of Divinity.

If it should be asked, what Reason I have to expect such very unkind Treatment as this, from Gentlemen whose *real Advantage* is professedly intended by this Publication? I answer, because, I have had the Assurance to collect together a *few*, out of the almost *innumerable* Contradictions which I have found in the Writings of some of

* This, it must be acknowledged, is a *carnal* Weapon; consequently such an one as was never used by the Apostles; (if we may be allowed to credit what Paul says to the Corinthians, in his 2 Ep. x. 4.) but notwithstanding such Weapons were deemed very unfit for the Hands of a Christian in the Apostles days, it is certain that they have since been found of excellent Advantage to *Mother Church*, in reducing her refractory Sons to the *obedience of Faith*.

† A low vulgar Phrase taken up by a modern Divine, from a late learned Professor, in one of our Universities, with Respect to the Discipline of a certain Bishop.

See Gill's *Infant Baptism a Part and Pillar of Popery*, p. 35.

their

their Brethren on the *sublime* Subject of *eternal Generation*, with a View to enable the enquiring Christian to judge of the Truth or Falshood of that Doctrine, which for so many Years, and with so much *Ignorance* and Zeal has been *wrathfully* contended for. This is the *Crimen Criminum*, the Crime of Crimes, for which I may expect to feel the Rod of their Resentment. But methinks their Time would be much better employed, could they prevail with themselves to sit down and attempt a Reconciliation of these several Contradictions; for if "Reason will tell us that not only in natural and moral, but also in divine Things, there is no surer Index of Falshood than *Contrariety*," it is not improbable, but that upon observing how these several *Right Reverends* have contradicted *themselves* and *one another*, many who are now strong in the Faith of this *mysterious* Doctrine, giving Glory to *their Pastors*, by implicitly believing *every Thing* they are pleased to assert concerning it, will be no longer able to hold fast their Profession of that Faith without *Wavering*.

"We cannot follow all, and among *equal* Authorities, pray which is the *Best*? For the same Reason that we cannot believe *every one* of them, we need believe *none* of them upon *their own Word*."

However, "if these Gentlemen are determined to be *angry* in Defence of their Opinions, and *oppress* for their Sake, let them not bely *Christ*, and say, it is for him; but let their Passions be made to answer for what nothing but their Passions can produce." And they would do well to remember, that, (waving every other Consideration) their

Ferocity

Ferocity) * is no very favourable Indication of the *Truth* of the Doctrine they are so earnestly contending for: for, "When Men contend for *Truth*, they will do it *calmly*, because they are sure it will support itself; but *Error*, conscious of its own weak Foundation, instantly flies for support to *Rage* and *Oppression*."

"Scolding (says the judicious Mr. *Thomas Bradbury*) is an Evidence that a Person comes rather for the Plunder of War, than the Success of the Cause †." I hope, therefore, our *Orthodox* Divines will take Care for the Future, when they are treating upon this Subject, how they give us Occasion to suspect that they have studied Rhetoric in the *Billingsgate Grammar* ‡, for though Roughness

* *The Wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable:* The Wisdom of the Schools is neither; first it is muddy, earthly and polluted, and then it is fierce and quarrelsome.

Bradbury's Sermon, Vol. I. p. 94.

† Ibid. p. 303.

‡ It may not be amiss to present the Reader with a Specimen of this kind of Rhetoric, as delivered from the Pulpit by a very eminent Defender of this *Yea and Nay* Doctrine, a little time ago.

After taking Notice, that the only two Persons of Note who expressed their Dissatisfaction of the Doctrine of eternal Generation, were a Dutch Professor, about the latter End of the last Century, and one in the Dissenting Interest in the beginning of this, He added, "When I say the only two Men, I mean Men of any Character. As for those *trifling, trivial, ignorant Scriblers*, I make no Account of them, who know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm."

At another time, when treating upon the same Subject, and evidently proceeding upon this false Hypothesis, that to deny the Doctrine of eternal Generation is to deny the true and proper Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ; "So early, says he, (meaning so early as the Days of the Evangelist John) did Satan begin to play that Game, which he pursued for some Hundreds of Years afterwards, namely,

to

ness and Incivility may be *one* Way of answering a (supposed) *Heretic* it will tempt all Mankind to think they have got *no other*.

I should

to deny or bring into Contempt one or other of the Natures of Christ, either his proper Deity or true Humanity, or to attack him in his Person, in one Shape or another, and is now, in our Day, playing the same Game anew, and with success too I fear: But he never did, and never will want FOOLS among Men to be his Tools to propagate his diabolical and pernicious Doctrines respecting the blessed Redeemer."

And at the Close of the same *edifying* Discourse: "Let Men first practice upon themselves, their own Generation and Production, and the Union of their Souls and Bodies together, and try if they can account for these Things, before they pretend to practice upon the Nature of God and the Generation of the SON and his divine Filiation. Let us not bring this down to the Bar of carnal Reason; or to have it examined, judged, and tried by carnal Generation among Men. And such as give themselves the Liberty to scoff and jeer at the eternal Generation of the SON, by making use of Phrases taken from carnal Generation among Men, shew a *vain* Mind, and a *rotten* Heart."

But let us suppose now, (for it must not be granted) that to deny the Doctrine of eternal Generation is to deny the true and proper Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Is *calling of Names* and making Use of *abusive* Language the *most likely* Means, in the Opinion of this Gentleman, to *convince Gainsayers* and *put to silence the Ignorance of foolish Men*? Is this to shew in *Doctrine Uncorruptness, Gravity, Sincerity, sound Speech*, that cannot be condemned, that he that is of a *contrary Part* may be *ashamed*, having no evil Thing to say of him? Is this in *Meekness* to *instruct those that oppose themselves*, if God *peradventure* will give them *Repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth*? Surely it is not.

"I may look upon a Person who denies the Divinity of Christ to be in a Mistake (says good Mr. Bradbury) and give him my Reasons why I cannot come into his Exposition of several Scriptures; but if I have felt the Power of that Resurrection for which I am pleading, and the Fellowship of those sufferings which I defend with my Arguments, and am conformed to that Death which I proclaim abroad, it will

I should be extremely sorry if, from the familiar Manner in which I have presumed to treat these reverend Gentlemen, any one should so far mistake me as to imagine that I either despise their Persons, or *indiscriminately* condemn the Doctrines they deliver; no, I *so account of them as of the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God* (a) and as such I esteem them very highly ⁱⁿ

will govern my Temper as well as direct my Notions. I have Reason to suspect whether my Wisdom is *pure*, if it does not make me *peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated*. When Orthodoxy puts us upon reviling Language and cruel Imprecations we are only foaming out our own shame. Sermon. Vol. 1. p. 303.

(a) 1 Cor. iv. 1. What the Apostle here calls the *Mysteries of God*, in Acts xx. 27. he calls *the Counsel of God*: and that by the *Counsel of God* we are to understand the *Gospel of the Grace of God*, is clear from the 24th Verse, where he says, that *the Ministry which he received of the Lord Jesus, was to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God*. Now the Doctrines of the Gospel, as they enter into the *Experience* of the Children of God, may be called the *Mysteries of God*, inasmuch as they are *secret or hidden from the natural Man*, who *receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, for they are Foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*, 1 Cor. ii. 14. But when a Sinner is quickened and made spiritually alive, then *to him it is GIVEN to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom*, Mat. xiii. 11. Whether he be a Right Reverend Father in God, an illiterate country Curate, or a Layman of the meanest natural Capacity; because *every Member of the mystical Body of Christ is a Partaker of the same Spirit, for by one Spirit* (says the Apostle) *we are all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles; whether we are bond or free; and have been all made to drink into the same Spirit*, 1 Cor. xii. 13. And it is only the Spirit of God, that *searcheth the deep Things of God*: for as *no Man knoweth the Things of a Man, save the Spirit of Man, which is in him; even so the Things of God knoweth no Man, but the Spirit of God*. And one End proposed to be answered by a Man's participating of this Spirit is, *that he may know the Things that are freely given to him of God*, 1 Cor. ii. 10—12.

in love for their Work's Sake (b). But, " Let Schoolmen, Doctors, Councils, Assemblies of

Now that the Doctrine of the eternal Generation of Christ is *not* one of the *Mysteries of God*, or a Doctrine of the Gospel of the Grace of God, is evident from what the Apostle says in the 27th Verse of this 20th Chapter of Acts, for if he did not shun to declare unto the Church at Ephesus *ALL* the Counsel of God, and yet never *once* mentions the Doctrine of eternal Generation, or any Thing like it, in any Part of his Epistle to that Church; it is evident that the Doctrine of Eternal Generation makes *no part* of the *Counsel of God*. And therefore, until it is *proved* that the Apostle *did* declare this Doctrine unto them, we *deny* it to be one of the *Mysteries of God*. We are ready to acknowledge, however, that it is a *MYSTERY*: nay, rather than merit the Displeasure of these learned Gentlemen, we will allow it to be *MYSTERIUM MYSTERIORUM*, the Mystery of Mysteries. But then we beg Leave to distinguish between the *Mysteries of GOD* and the *Mysteries of the PARSONS*.

And really it is very diverting to see the Difference that there is between the Apostle's Opinion, and the Opinion of his Successors. The Apostle having sent from *Miletus* to *Ephesus*, and called unto him the Elders of that Church, tells them, that he had kept back nothing that was *profitable* unto them, *Acts* xx. 24, and yet, as before observed, he never *once* mentions the Doctrine of Eternal Generation, or any Thing like it, in any Part of his Epistle to that Church; therefore (even supposing the *Whim* of Eternal Generation, did come into his Head) it is very evident, that he did not think the Doctrine would be *profitable* unto them, otherwise he would not have *kept it back*. But his Successors, or at least one of them tells us, that the Doctrine of the eternal Generation of Christ is a *Matter of infinite Moment and Concern*, and deserving the *strictest* Attention and Observation: An Article of Faith *most surely to be believed*. See CREED Article 10th.

Now, either the Apostle deceived the Ephesians, or his Successors have a mind to deceive us, but I have too great an Opinion of the Apostle's *honesty* to believe the former, and have had too much Insight into the *holy Trade of PRIESTCRAFT* to render me very incredulous respecting the Latter.

(b) 1 Thes. v. 13.

Divines,

Divines, Universities, Ministers, propound and publish what Doctrine they please, the Sheep of Christ, the faithful Flock have *power* and *authority* from Christ himself, to try and judge whether the Things they speak be of Christ, or of *themselves* and of *Antichrist*: And this Power the faithful People ought not to part with, neither for any *fear*, nor for any *favour*: And had not Christian People *unchristianly* delivered up their Judgment to the Clergy, and that in the very *highest* Points of Religion, Christianity had not been so miserably blinded and corrupted as it is."

" If therefore the Question is about any Point of Doctrine, we should (as the learned Dr. Gill well observes *) look into the Scriptures, search them, see and read what they say, for they are *profitable for Doctrine* (c) for finding it out, explaining, confirming, and defending it, these will tell us whether the Thing in debate is so or no, and will direct us which Side of the Question to take. We are not to be influenced by Men of Learning and Wealth. Though these should be on the other Side of the Question, it should be no Stumbling to us: Had this been a Rule to be attended to, Christianity had never got Footing in the World: It should be no Bias on our Minds that such and such a Man of so much Grace and Excellent Gifts, thought and practised so and so; nor should it concern us that the greatest Number is on the opposite Side."

I shall not be at all surprized if those who have been *taught* to look upon the Doctrine of Eternal Generation as a Matter of *infinite Moment* and

* Serm. Scriptures the only Guide, p. 8. 9. 11.

(c) 2 Tim. iii. 16.

Concern, should express their Disapprobation of the *Manner* in which I have treated so *serious* and *interesting* a Subject, as they weakly imagine this to be; but let it be remembered, that of how much Importance soever this Doctrine may appear to those who embrace Articles of Faith, merely because the *Church* believes them, it appears to me to be (not a *cunningly* devised Fable; for if we consult the several Articles of the following Creed, we shall find that it is not very *cunningly* put together, but) an *old Wife's Fable*, and therefore I have treated it in the Manner that all *old Wives Fables* *deserve* to be treated.

T H E
C R E E D, &c.

I. **W**E *believe* that JESUS CHRIST is the SON of GOD by *eternal Generation* of the *Substance* of the FATHER (a)—yet, *we believe* that the FATHER's *Essence* or *Substance* is *not* * the Matter out of which he is begotten (b).

II. *We believe* that JESUS CHRIST is the SON of GOD, according to the *divine Nature* (c)

(a) Hufsey's *Glory of Christ Unveiled*, p. 97.

* Here one Gentleman positively *asserts* what the other as positively *denies*; and in a Matter the Belief of which (they would persuade us) is of the *last* Importance. Now as but *one* of these Testimonies can be *true*, a Doubt must necessarily arise in the Mind of the inquiring Christian, which of them to *believe*; which Doubt must remain until *one* of these two Gentlemen shall have established his own *Infallibility*, respecting this Matter. This cannot be expected of the Former, because he is *dead*; and when it is done by the Latter, I will venture, in the Name of the whole Body of Anti-eternal Generationists to promise him, that we will believe every Absurdity which he hath already advanced, or may hereafter advance in support of the *sublime* Doctrine of *eternal Generation*, as *implicitly* as a Papist believes the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*—And what can any Gentleman reasonably desire more.

(b) Gill on the Trinity, p. 184. (c) Ibid. p. 154.

—yet,

—yet, *we believe* that the *divine Nature* of the SON is no more *begotten*, than the *divine Nature* of the FATHER (*d*).

III. *We believe* that JESUS CHRIST is *begotten* as GOD (*e*)—yet, *we believe* that we are *very wrongly* represented as holding that the *DIVINITY* of CHRIST is *begotten* (*f*).

IV. *We believe* that the *DIVINE ESSENCE* neither *begets* nor is *begotten*: that the first Person called the FATHER is of *none*; that the second Person called the SON is *of the FATHER*; and that the third Person called the HOLY GHOST, or HOLY SPIRIT, is *from the FATHER and the SON* (*g*)—yet, *we believe* that the first Way of the *DIVINE ESSENCE* acting upon ITSELF *produceth* the first PERSON, that the second Way of its acting upon ITSELF *produceth* the second PERSON, and that the third Way of its acting or working upon ITSELF *produceth* the third PERSON (*h*).

V. *We*

(*d*) Gill on the Trinity, p. 183.

(*e*) Ibid. p. 176.—If he is *begotten* as GOD then he cannot *naturally* and *necessarily* Exist; but must be a *begotten* GOD, and as such, can be no more the Object of divine Worship than an Idol of Gold or Silver, Wood or Stone.

(*f*) Ibid. p. 184.—If his *Divinity* is not *begotten*, how then can he be *begotten* as GOD?—Can GOD Exist without his GOD-HEAD? or a *DIVINE PERSON* be without his *DIVINITY*?

(*g*) Ibid. p. 183. — Norton's Orthodox Evangelist, p. 25, 26.

(*h*) Norton's Orthodox Evangelist, p. 24.—How greatly are we indebted to our *scholastic* Divines for this *important* Discovery, which, but for *them*, had remained a *profound Secret* unto this very Moment! The Patriarchs and Prophets under the Old Testament Dispensation, take *no Manner of Notice of it*: Nor did our glorious IMMANUEL that great PROPHET and incomparable Teacher of the Church, when
here

V. *We believe* that the FATHER was not *Fons Deitatis*, or the Fountain of the *DEITY**; but

here upon Earth, say *one Syllable* about it; at least not *publicly*, and if he ever did *Whisper* any such Doctrine into the Ears of his Apostles, it was certainly very unkind in them not to communicate the *important Secret* to us: The Whole of their Writings being intirely silent as to this Matter.

It has been asserted (and I have not the least Inclination to contradict it) that “The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of GOD, and the only Rule of Faith and Practice^a. That to the Law and to the Testimony, if Men speak not according to this *Word*, it is because there is no Light in them; that we should not believe *every Spirit*, but *try* the Spirits whether they are of GOD; that this Trial should be made according to *the Word of GOD*; that the Scriptures should be searched, as they were by the noble Bereans, to see whether the Things delivered to Consideration are so or no^b.” But if the Belief of the Doctrine contained in *this Article*, is insisted upon as absolutely Necessary to constitute the *orthodox Christian*, how strangely mistaken these Persons appear to be. All that we have now to do, is, at once to give up our *Bibles* and our *Understanding* to the *Priests*, believe *every Thing* they say, and trust *them* with the keeping of our Souls: and then perhaps we may have the Happiness to travel with *them* toward the same Place that Paul and his Companions did when they journeyed from Puteoli, Acts xxviii. 14.—ROME.

* By *DEITY* I suppose the Doctor means the PERSONS of the SON and SPIRIT in the DEITY (for what can be the Fountain of the *Nature and Essence* of GOD?) and if so he is undoubtedly in the Right; especially if what Mr. John Norton says in the preceeding Article is *true*, namely, that the *first Person*, or FATHER himself, is *produced* by the *divine Essence*, as well as the Persons of the SON and of the HOLY GHOST. But then how will this Gentleman make it appear that the FATHER is *of none* but is GOD *of himself*, when he is said to be *produced* by the *divine Essence*? That the SON is GOD *of himself* when he is said not only to be *produced* by the *divine Essence*, but also to be *begotten* of the FATHER? and that the HOLY GHOST is

^a Gill's Declaration of Faith, &c. Article 1.

^b Gill's Serm. Scrip. Only Guide, &c. p. 9.

but that as the FATHER is GOD of HIMSELF, so the SON is GOD of HIMSELF, and the SPIRIT is GOD of HIMSELF (i):—yet we believe that the personal Property of the FATHER is to beget; that it is the personal Property of the SON to be begotten; and that the proceeding and coming forth of the HOLY GHOST from the FATHER, is not to be understood of Order and Designation only; but of his proceeding and coming forth of the same Essence or Substance of the FATHER: proceeding, signifying the Being of one Person of another (k).

VI. We believe that if CHRIST bears the Character of a SON on account of his being the High-Priest, or MEDIATOR of the Church, he could not be a SON before his Investiture with that Office; but it is most clear that he was: for the Word of the Oath, which was since the Law, maketh or constituteth the SON an High-Priest or MEDIATOR; and therefore he

GOD of himself, when he is said not only to be produced by the divine Essence, but to be from the FATHER, and the SON?

However, if the Doctor upon a Trial should find the Undertaking rather too laborious for him, and will condescend to apply to those of his learned Brethren, whom I would distinguish by the Appellation of the Worshipful Company of MYSTERY MONGERS (I mean those Persons who, to serve their own particular Purposes, are fond of making Mysteries of the most plain and intelligible Passages in the Word of GOD) I make no doubt but they will be very ready to lend him a helping Hand; and from their well known Qualifications to write upon this sublime Subject, what apparent Absurdities, glaring Inconsistencies, and downright Contradictions may we not expect to see perfectly reconciled?

(i) Gill on the Trinity, p. 97.

(k) Norton's Orthodox Evangelist, p. 28—30. Grantham's Christianismus Primitivus, B. 2. Ch. 2. §. 4.

was

was a SON *before* he was a MEDIATOR. This is so *clear* and *illustrious* a Testimony unto the *Truth* of the SON-SHIP of CHRIST, as a DIVINE PERSON, that we are persuaded it will be impossible for the Wit of Man, by any *Arts* or *Shifts*, to cloud and enervate its force (l):—yet *we believe* that it was in the *Covenant of Grace* that CHRIST was constituted MEDIATOR: if therefore that *Covenant once* was not; it must be allowed that *once* CHRIST was not the Head of the Elect of GOD; but such *blessed Divinity* ought to be eternally abhorred, as that which saps the very Foundation of all the Christian's Faith and Hope (m).

VII. *We*

(l) Brine's Serm. Proper Eternity of the divine Decrees, &c. p. 14.

(m) Brine's Serm. Proper Etern. &c. p. 23. "It is to be wished (says this Gentleman, in a Note p. 22.) that some Persons could prevail with themselves to rest satisfied without becoming Authors; especially on *sublime Subjects*, which they are not *qualified* to write about, and therefore they expose themselves, and do much Prejudice to the Truth by their Publications on such Subjects."

How confident Mr. Brine might be of his own Qualifications to write on *sublime Subjects*, or what Prejudice he may have done to the *Truth* by the Publication of this Sermon, I pretend not to determine; but that he has thereby greatly *exposed himself*, is but too evident from the above Article: for if Christ was a SON *before* he was made a High-Priest or MEDIATOR, it is very evident that *once* he was *not* a MEDIATOR: And if *once* he was *not* a MEDIATOR, it must be allowed that *once* there was no Covenant of Grace; because it was in that Covenant (this Gentleman says) that he was constituted MEDIATOR. So that Mr. Brine himself establishes *that very Divinity* which he is pleased *sneeringly* to distinguish by the Epithet *blessed*, and which, he says, ought to be *eternally abhorred* as that which saps the very Foundation of all the Christian's Faith and Hope. And yet, astonishing as it may seem, he humbly hopes

VII. *We believe* that JESUS CHRIST was anointed as MEDIATOR from all * Eternity ; that is, he was *invested with his Office as such* (n) :—yet *we believe* that by considering distinctly, and apart, his several Offices of KING, PRIEST and PROPHET, and his *Investiture* into them, we can *prove* that he existed as a SON *previous* to his being the MEDIATOR. As to his *Kingly Office*, and his *Instalment* into that ; it is said, *Heb. i. 8. But unto the SON he saith, Thy Throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever ; a scepter of Righteousness is the Scepter of thy Kingdom :* which Words are directed to CHRIST,

(p. 33.) that he hath established the *Proper Eternity* of the MEDIATORIAL Office of CHRIST beyond sober and modest Objection ! What an *inexpressible Happiness* it is to be *so well qualified* to write on this *sublime Subject* !

But this Sermon it seems was published at the Request of the MINISTERS, as well as others who heard it. (vide Title Page.) Quere, Who were those Ministers, and what was their *Aim* in requesting the Publication of it ? I can hardly prevail with myself to believe that they meant to have their worthy Brother *expose himself* in the Manner he has done ; and if they judged it to be a *sensible, judicious, and consistent* Discourse, and were apprehensive that it would prove a *Pillar of Support* to their *unscriptural, tottering* Doctrine of eternal Generation, it only serves to Demonstrate that *Blindness in part hath happened to Israel*.

* It were greatly to be wished that our *ingenious, intelligent, Eternal-Generation* Gentlemen would condescend to tell us what they mean when they say of such or such a Thing that it was done *from* Eternity ; of others that they were done *in* Eternity ; and of others that were they done from *all* Eternity. If by these several Modes of Expression, the *same* Thing is intended, then here is a *Distinction* without a *Difference*. And if *different Ideas* are intended to be conveyed hereby, let them tell us what those Ideas are—if they are able : for it would be *cruel* to insist upon their performing *Impossibilities*, though some of them we find have a *Knack* at *that* also. See the following Note.

(n) Gill on Heb. i. 9.

under

under the Character of *the SON*; and contain the FATHER's solemn Inauguration of him into his Kingly Office. Concerning his *Priestly Office*, we read, that *the Law maketh Men High Priests which have Infirmary; but the Word of the Oath, which was since the Law, maketh the SON, who is consecrated for evermore*: That is, *the Word of the Oath*, or God's eternal Counsel and Covenant, which hath been made more clear and manifest *since the Law* was given, *maketh the SON*: What? Not a SON; but maketh the SON a PRIEST: it follows then that he was a SON *before* he was a PRIEST; *before* he was constituted as such, or *invested* with the Priestly Office. And he was the SON of GOD, *previous* to his *Investiture* with, Entrance upon, or Discharge of his Prophetic Office (o).

(o) Gill on the Trinity, p. 166, 167. Here the learned Doctor appears to be in the same Dilemma with his Cotemporary, Mr. *Brine*; for if CHRIST was invested with his Office as MEDIATOR from *all Eternity*, how could he be a SON *previous* to, or before he was a MEDIATOR? And if he was a SON *before* he was a MEDIATOR, how could he be *invested* with his Office as MEDIATOR from *all Eternity*.

For my own Part I readily acknowledge myself to be as ignorant of this *Mystery*, as *Nicodemus* appears to have been of *Regeneration*; and do humbly apprehend, that none but a Person *properly qualified* to write on this *sublime Subject*, will ever be able to explain it.

It may be remarked, however, that notwithstanding Mr. *Brine* hath asserted that CHRIST was a SON *before* he was a MEDIATOR, and that his being so is so *clear* and *illustrious* a Testimony unto the Truth of his SONSHIP, as a *divine Person*, that it would be impossible for the Wit of Man by any *Arts* or *Shifts* to cloud and enervate its Force; yet both himself and the learned Doctor appear to have had *Wit* enough to perform this *supposed* Impossibility, by asserting that he was invested with his Office as a MEDIATOR from *all Eternity*.

VIII. *We believe that Ps. ii. 7. Thou art my SON, this Day have I begotten thee*, is a *Proof* of CHRIST's eternal Filiation; and that the Phrase *this Day* may well be thought to express *Eternity*, which is with GOD an eternal NOW (*p*):—yet *we believe* that the Scope of this Psalm is *not* about GOD's *Essence* in any of his Abstract Revelation of the SON's Person or Subsistence; that the whole Coherence speaks *wide* of the eternal Generation of the SON; that *Eternity* is no where said to be a *Day*; that this *begetting* of him was as a *filial MEDIATOR*, or as a *mediatorial SON* into his throne: and that the Day of so *begetting* him was the proper Day of his Exaltation, and open Reign, in the *human Nature* above the Angels (*q*).

IX. *We believe that Ps. cx. 3. Of the Womb of the early Morning, to thee the Dew of thy Youth*, may be understood of CHRIST his GODHEAD: that the FATHER saith unto him, *Of the Womb* (that is, of mine own *Essence*) before the *early Morning* (that is, before the World was) *to thee* was (or thou hadst) *the Dew of thy Youth* (or Birth): So noting his eternal Generation before all Worlds (*r*):—yet *we believe* that not CHRIST
himself

(*p*) Gill on the Trin. p. 181.

(*q*) Hufsey's Glo. Chr. Unv. p. 91—94.

(*r*) Ainsworth on Ps. cx. 3.—This reading of the Words is taken from the Psalm as inserted by Ainsworth in his Annotations on the Book of Psalms; but how unmercifully is the Text *racked* and *tortured* by this learned Expositor, to make it speak in the glorious Cause of eternal Generation! *Of the Womb of the early Morning*, is the *express* Language of the Text, and not of *mine own Essence*, as this Gentleman is pleased to expound it. Nor does the Text say *of the Womb BEFORE the early Morning*; but *of the Womb OF the early Morning*.—What shuffling is here to persuade the Christian

himself is here spoken of, but *the Multitude of People that should be converted unto CHRIST* upon the first preaching of the Gospel; very fitly compared to the Morning Dew; or more poetically to the Dew of the Womb of the Morning; both to express the *Multitude*, who should, as it were, overspread the Earth, as the Dew doth use to cover it; and the *Manner* of their heavenly Generation, by the immediate Operation of GOD'S SPIRIT: And that the Sense given of these Words, as formed upon the Septuagint, and vulgate Latin Versions, respecting the *Generation* of CHRIST's human or *divine Nature*, is *without any Foundation* in the original Text (s).

X. *We believe* that the Phrase *brought forth* in Prov. viii. 24. is to be understood of the *eternal Generation* and *SONSHIP* of CHRIST, and that the Repetition of it in ver. 25. is partly to shew the *Importance* of it; it being a matter of *infinite Moment and Concern*, and deserving the *strictest Attention* and Observation: and partly to shew the *Certainty* of it; the *eternal Generation* of CHRIST being an Article of Faith *most surely to be believed* (t):—yet *we believe* that although Prov. viii. 22—30. is a glorious Proof of CHRIST's eternal Existence, it is not so clear an one of his *eternal SONSHIP*. The Phrases of *setting up, possessing, bringing forth,*

tian World into the Belief of a whimsical Doctrine which hath no Foundation either in *Reason* or *Revelation*! Can such Persons say with the Apostle, 2 Cor. iv. 2. that they have renounced the *hidden Things of DISHONESTY, not walking in CRAFTINESS, nor handling the Word of GOD DECEITFULLY?*

(s) Assembly's Annot. and Gill on Ps. cx. 3.

(t) Gill on Prov. viii. 24, 25.

and

and *bringing up* seem rather to refer to his *Mediatorial Office* (u).

XI. *We believe* that Prov. xxx. 4. *What is his Name? and what is his SON's Name, if thou canst tell?* is a *Proof* of CHRIST's being the *eternal SON* of GOD. *What is his Name?* that is, his *Nature and Perfections*, which are incomprehensible and ineffable: And seeing he has a SON of the *same Nature* with him, and possessed of the same *Perfections*, say what is his *Nature and Perfections* also? declare his *Generation*, and the *Manner* of it; his *divine Filiation*, and in what *Class* it is (w):—yet *we believe* that these Words are spoken in *another Sense*, viz. if any such Man that could *gather the Wind in his Fists, bind the Waters in a Garment, or establish all the Ends of the Earth*, ever were in the World, tell us somewhat of his *Generation or Pedigree*: if alive, and in Being, *What is his Name?* or if

(u) Gill on the Trin. p. 182.

(w) Gill on Prov. xxx. 4.—So says the *Doctor*, but the *Text* says nothing at all about *Generation* or *Filiation*: for even admitting it to have some Reference to JEHOVAH the FATHER, and his SON JESUS CHRIST, (which I will be bold to affirm it has not) and that by the Word NAME we are to understand *NATURE*: the Question relates no more to the *Generation* of the one, than it does to the *Generation* of the other. It is not here said, *Who can declare his Generation, and the Manner of it? his divine Filiation, and in what Class it is;* but what is his *Nature and Perfections?* which are incomprehensible and ineffable:—But Ainsworth it seems is, in the Opinion of the Doctor, an *incomparable Author* (*vide* Preface to his Exposition of Solomon's Song, 1st Edit.); and from the short Specimen he has given us of his Abilities to write on this *sublime Subject*, in his Exposition of Ps. cx. 3. we may the more easily account for the ingenious Turn which the Doctor has given to this Text.

dead

dead, where are any of his Posterity? *What is his SON'S Name if thou canst tell (x)?*

XII. *We believe* that *Isa. liii. 8. Who shall declare his Generation?* is to be understood of the Generation of CHRIST from *Eternity*, in regard of his GODHEAD (y):—yet *we believe* that it is *not* to be understood of his *divine Generation*, as the SON of GOD; but of the Age and Men of it, in which he lived; whose Barbarity to him, and Wickedness they were guilty of, were such as could not be declared by the Mouth, or described by the Pen of Man (z).

XIII. *We believe* that *Micah v. 2. Whose Goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting,* may be understood of the *eternal Generation* and SONSHIP of CHRIST, as commonly interpreted (a):—yet *we believe* that *Micah v. 2.* is a strong and clear Proof of CHRIST's *Eternity*, but *not of his SONSHIP* (b).

XIV. *We believe* that the *divine Generation* of CHRIST, because of the Excellency and Ineffableness of it, is expressed in the *plural* Number,

(x) Norton's *Orthod. Ev.* p. 38. *Assemb. Annot.* on *Prov. xxx. 4.*

(y) *Assemb. Annot.* on *Isa. liii. 8.*—This does not appear to be the Judgment of the Assembly of Divines, whose Annotations are here referred to; but inasmuch as they have therein asserted that some do so understand this Passage; and not only they, but the learned Dr. Gill, in his *Treatise on the Trinity*, p. 183. says, that most of the Antients understood this of the eternal Generation of CHRIST, I think I have sufficient Authority for setting it down as an Article in this *mysterious and wonderful CREED.*

(z) Gill on *Isa. liii. 8.*

(a) Gill on *Micah, v. 2.*

(b) Gill on the *Trinity*, p. 182.

Goings

Goings forth (c) :—yet we believe that the Phrase *his Goings forth*, denotes *more Acts than one*; and cannot intend the FATHER's begetting of the SON (d).

XV. We believe that *John i. 14.* We beheld his Glory (*the Glory as of the only begotten of the FATHER*), is to be understood of the Glory of the *divine Nature* which is *essential* to him, and underived, is equal to his FATHER's Glory, is transcendent to all creatures, and is ineffable and incomprehensible (e) :—yet we believe that it could *not* be the *essential* Glory of the GODHEAD of CHRIST, for the Apostles openly *saw* it, (as the Word signifies) and therefore it is *not* meant of the Glory of that GODHEAD itself, which is *invisible*; but of those glorious Perfections that dwell in his PERSON; as

(c) Gill on Micah v. 2.

(d) Gill on the Trinity, p. 182.—It is a very judicious Remark made by the Dr. in his Sermon, *Form of sound Words*, &c. p. 11. that “ If Ministers, when they have formed and digested from Scripture a Scheme, a System of Gospel-Truths, would be careful to say nothing contrary to it, there would not be that want of Consistency, justly complained of in the present Ministry in common, nor that Confusion in the Minds of Hearers.” But lest any one should presume to charge the Doctor with contradicting, in any part of this Article, that Scheme or System of Gospel-Truths, which he hath formed and digested from Scripture, (in the common Acceptation of the Term) be it remembered, that this eternal Generation-Scheme (whatever is pretended of it) is destitute both of *Truth* and of *common Sense*; nor can it be said, to be formed and digested from Scripture in any other Sense than as some of our *blundering* Divines, and *raw Academics* may be said to discourse from a Text :—that is, *away from it*.

(e) Gill on John i. 14.

Holiness,

Holiness, Wisdom, &c. for it follows, *full of Grace and Truth* (f).

XVI. *We believe*, that in *John* v. 26. where it is said, *As the FATHER hath Life in himself, so hath he given to the SON to have Life in himself*; this Doctrine of the eternal Generation of the SON, of the *Essence* of the FATHER is expressly taught us (g):—yet *we believe* that the SON has Life in himself *essentially, originally, and inderivatively* as the FATHER has, being equally the *living GOD*, the Fountain of Life and Donor of it as he; and therefore this is *not* a Life which he *gives* or *communicates* to him; but *eternal Life* is what the one *gives*, and the other *receives* according to the OEconomy of Salvation settled between them (h).

XVII. *We believe* that when CHRIST is called *the first-born of every Creature*, Col. i. 15. the Sense either is that he was *begotten* of the FATHER in a Manner inconceivable and inexpressible by Men, before any Creature was in Being: or that he is the first Parent, or Bringer forth of every Creature into Being (i):—yet *we believe* that is spoken of him, as he is admitted into the Catalogue or Society of Creatures as his *Fellows*, into their Number, or as he is become *one of them*. It is spoken of him in respect of *Predestination*, not of his *eternal Generation* (k).

XVIII. *We believe* that the Term *Image*, Col. i. 15. is to be understood of CHRIST as the

(f) Goodwin's Works, Vol. II. p. 104.

(g) Hufley's Glory of Christ Unv. p. 97.

(h) Gill on John v. 26.

(i) Gill on Col. i. 15.

(k) Goodwin's Works Vol. II. p. 110, 111.

second Person or SON of GOD, in which Sense he is the *natural, essential, and eternal Image* of his FATHER (l):—yet *we believe* that it is not to be understood of the GODHEAD, or *Person* of CHRIST, who considered simply as *second Person*, is in himself as invisible as the GODHEAD of the Person of the FATHER; but that he is such an Image as makes the GODHEAD, which is in itself *invisible, or incomprehensible*, to be *manifest and visible*: for that is the End of an *Image*; namely, to *hold forth* a Thing, to make it *apparent* to the View, which otherwise is not seen. It is in CHRIST as *Man* united unto the *second Person*, that there is a Resultance, an Edition of the GODHEAD, in all the Perfections of it (m).

XIX. *We believe* that the SON of GOD may be called *the Brightness*, or sent-forth Light of his FATHER's Glory, in respect of his *Deity*, whereby is signified both the *Manner* of his *essential* Generation, viz. that it was *from* his FATHER, and also his *Consubstantiality* with the FATHER; that is, that he is of the same *Essence* with him (n).—yet *we believe* that *Heb. i. 3. The Brightness of his FATHER's Glory, and the express Image of his Person*, is applied by the Apostle to CHRIST, as he was MAN; namely, as he was appointed Heir of all: which Phrase, as he is merely *second Person*, might not be used of him; for so he is *Hæres Natus*; not *constitutus*, appointed Heir, but *begotten*. Now as the Rays or Beams

(l) Gill on Col. i. 15.

(m) Goodwin's Works, Vol. II. p. 104.

(n) Assemb. Annot. on Heb. i. 3.

of the Sun are but the *Effusions* and *Effects* of the Sun itself, and so far *inferior* to the substantial glorious Body of it; so this *Image* or Shine of the GODHEAD's Glory in the MANHOOD of CHRIST is but an *Effect*; and so far *inferior* to that *essential* Glory which, as *second Person*, he partakes of in common with the FATHER (o).

So much for this *extraordinary* and *wonderful* CREED; the Articles of which I could multiply almost *ad infinitum*. But as I would not willingly burden the Memory of our Eternal-Generation-Gentlemen (which it seems is very treacherous) with more than is absolutely necessary to put them into a Capacity of giving an Answer to every Man that asketh them a Reason of the Hope that is in them respecting this sublime Doctrine; I shall break off here, lest when they are called upon to say their Catechism, (as the School-boys phrase it) they should not be able, with Reputation to themselves, and Advantage to the Audience to rehearse the Articles of their Belief.

Upon the whole:—If Demonstration must go before Conviction, and Conviction before Assent, I would only beg leave to ask whether it is not highly *unreasonable* for any Man or Sett of Men whatever, either to demand, or to be angry with us, because we cannot (consistent with a good Conscience) give our Assent to the Doctrine of eternal Generation, the Truth of which, no one

(o) Goodwin's Works, Vol. II. p. 104.

ever yet *did*, nor I am persuaded ever will be able to demonstrate.

However, if any of the learned Gentlemen, who are Advocates for this Doctrine, have any thing further to offer in Support of it, I shall carefully attend to it; and promise, upon Conviction, to make a *public* Acknowledgment of my Mistake; but I hope it will be more to the Purpose than their *Pulpit Effusions*; otherwise they may assure themselves, I shall continue to believe that I may be saved *without* holding this *ridiculous* Article of the Catholic Faith, notwithstanding all that *St. Athanasius*, or any other Saint hath said, or may say to the contrary.

But lest from the Circumstance of my Disbelief of the Doctrine of Eternal Generation, I should be very ungenerously ranked by these *Orthodox* Divines amongst “the whole *Herd* * “of *Antitrinitarians* ;” I think it incumbent upon me to declare, that I believe *there are three that bear Record in Heaven, the FATHER, the WORD, and the HOLY GHOST, and these Three are ONE*, 1 John v. 7. But if I am enquired of, whether they are three Modes, Operations, or infinite Minds: I answer with the judicious Mr. *Thomas Bradbury* (Serm. Vol. I. pag. 306.) that “these are Words which the *Scripture* hath not given me, and *therefore* I have nothing to say to them. If the Question is, Whether they are *three*? I can answer, yes. If I am asked whether they are *three Gods*? I must say no; but *how* they are three, and *how* they are one, I

* See Gill's Serm. *Form of sound Words*, p. 14.

do not pretend to tell." And I submit it to the serious Consideration of these Gentlemen, whether it would not be better for them at once to make the same *honest* Declaration; than by attempting to explain that which will remain for ever inexplicable; *perplex* themselves, *confound* their Hearers, and *strengthen the Hands* of Unbelievers and Infidels.

F I N I S.

do not seem to tell. And I think it
without mention of the Gentlemen
that it should not be better for them at once
make some sort of Declaration; than by at-
tempting to explain that which will remain far
more inexplicable; and which themselves, compared
their Masters, and strengthen the hands of the
licentious and Infidels.